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AUTHOR Cates, Dennis L.; And Others
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ABSTRACT

A project is described in which students with severe disabilities from a self-contained day school were successfully integrated into a program within the main building of a regular campus which included limited participation in a regular fourth grade classroom. The project was initiated after various preparations were made, including building adaptations, such as provision of access for walkers and wheelchairs; faculty preparation, including discussion of expectations and introduction of the special education faculty; and student preparation, including discussions of mental retardation and the rationale and benefits of the project as well as fears and concerns. The project involved instituting a fourth grade partnering class in which nonhandicapped students who volunteered to be "partners" to their handicapped peers assumed such responsibilities as selection of reading materials, helping with lunch, assisting with art and music, participating in language-building activities, and planning activities. Activities took place in both classrooms with participation of regular and special education teachers. The paper emphasizes the roles of university personnel, special education administration, elementary counselors, regular classroom teachers, and special education teachers. Appendices provide training materials for teachers and students, measures of student attitudes before and after the project, a mainstreaming activity list, and suggestions for modifying instruction for the special education student. The document contains seven references. (BRM)

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Severely and Profoundly Handicapped Students in the Regular Classroom: It is Happening Now

Dennis L. Cates, Ed.D.
Visiting Assistant Professor
Department of Educational Psychology
College of Education
The University of South Carolina
Columbia, South Carolina 29208

Helen McGill
Director of Special Education, Retired
Amarillo Independent School District
Amarillo, Texas

Linda Brian
Elementary Counselor
Amarillo Independent School District

Ann Wilder
Elementary Teacher
Amarillo Independent School District
Amarillo, Texas

Tina Androes
Special Education Teacher
Amarillo Independent School District
Amarillo Texas

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Severely and Profoundly Handicapped Students in the Regular Classroom: It is Happening Now

The purpose of this presentation is to discuss elements of a successful effort to integrate severely and profoundly handicapped students into a regular classroom. A panel will discuss factors which have contributed to this success. The panel consists of a teacher educator, director of special education, regular classroom teacher, teacher of severely and profoundly handicapped students, and an elementary counselor. Members of the panel will focus on their roles in the integration process. The presentation will highlight one program involving students who had attended a self-contained day school and made the transition to a self-contained classroom with limited participation in a regular classroom. Panel members will address the dynamics of the program and offer ideas which may prove beneficial to those attempting to mainstream this population.

Role of University Personnel

Local school districts are experiencing an increase in the enrollment of multihandicapped and severely and profoundly handicapped students (Stainback, S. & Stainback, W., 1985, p. 65). This increase often produces tremendous stress due to the limited availability of adequately trained staff. Contributing to this stress is the issue of mainstreaming. The success of mainstreaming efforts will

depend largely upon improvements in teacher training and on the willingness of school administrations to support programs utilizing environmental analyses and chronologically age-appropriate placements (Berres & Knoblock, 1987, p. 9).

Teacher preparation is an important factor in the success of programs designed to integrate multihandicapped and severely/profoundly handicapped students. Because many generic programs focus on students with mild handicaps, special education teachers enter the field with little exposure to working with this population. This will prove to be a problem when these teachers are called upon to consult with regular classroom teachers about methods of integrating these students into the regular classroom. We must examine the nature of teacher training programs and consider the extent to which special education teachers should be trained to educate this population.

To prepare regular and special education teachers for successful mainstreaming of severely and profoundly handicapped students, special education teacher training programs must be willing to address issues related to barriers which exist between regular and special education (Lilly, 1985, p. 307). Some of those issues include expansion of teachers' knowledge base relative to the education of a wide range of students, a lack of sensitivity on the part of some individuals f r the needs of all children, a need for

increased transdisciplinary teaming, and a clarification of the term "noncategorical".

Barriers which exist between regular and special education often begin to form during teacher training programs. Students may find themselves feeling separated from each other due to programming. If mainstreaming is to work, teacher training programs must actively promote a sense of unity among their students (Lilly, 1987, p. 307).

As the number of handicapped students on regular campuses increases, teacher training programs will be called upon to expose all teacher trainees to techniques designed to reach a wide range of ability levels and handicapping conditions. In addition to improved training in teaching strategies, teacher trainees will be exposed to programs designed to increase their sensitivity to the needs of every child. Teacher training programs must provide practical experience in transdisciplinary teaming. Transdisciplinary teaming will be essential for successfully integrating handicapped children into regular classrooms. Such teaming will require the elimination of disciplinary barriers and the development of skills in collaboration (Orelove & Sobsey, 1987, p. 9).

Generic special education programs must increase exposure to low-incidence handicapping conditions if they are to become truly non-categorical. This will not, however,

mean the demise of low incidence specialists, rather, it will require increased skills in collaboration.

Until the changes which are needed occur, what can teacher training programs do? First, efforts should be made to include procedures courses for low incidence populations in generic special education programs. Graduate students should be encouraged to select these courses as electives where possible. Second, special educators should have increased exposure to the consultant teacher model. Skills in consultation will be beneficial when efforts to integrate handicapped students are initiated (Stainback, S. & Stainback, W., 1985, p. 72). Third, special education students should have greater exposure to low incidence populations in rural settings. Such placements will prepare these students for working with itinerant teachers and consultants who are not able to provide uninterrupted services. Fourth, regular and special education faculty can share lectures. Such efforts will send a clear message to students that barriers are nonexistent and that all educators are concerned about quality education. Students who are exposed to faculty who are collaborating are likely to have a more positive attitude toward collaboration in the future. Fifth, faculty should provide opportunities for all students to experience positive interaction with a wide variety of special needs populations. Finally, faculty should become

involved in collaborative efforts between special and regular education professional organizations. This can begin by encouraging student groups to combine their efforts. Conference planning is another area which could benefit from joint efforts from regular and special organization.

The teachers involved in this program participated in a Generic Special Education Program that prepares resource teachers to work with mildly handicapped students, but includes a course in multiple impairments. This course exposes students to characteristics of and strategies for working with students who are severely and multiply impaired. Because of her background in this special education program, the regular classroom teacher was willing to participate in a team effort with the teacher of the severely and profoundly handicapped. This team approach was effective because of the involvement of administrators, counselors, mainstream teachers, parents, and special education teachers.

Role of Special Education Administration

Implementation of the mainstreaming project began with the Fall semester of 1987. Students from the self-contained school were bused to regular campuses. Despite a rather simple plan, implementation proved to be logistically complex. Because of the disruption of long established routines, some students had difficulty accepting the program.

Although some parents and staff were happy with the results, they realized that much time was lost to bus travel.

Early in 1989, parents were asked to attend a meeting where issues were discussed. The parents overwhelmingly supported maintaining the separate campus. Thus, the administration was faced with the difficult task of resolving an earlier complaint from the Office of Civil Rights and helping parents understand the benefits of moving to a new campus. Initially, school staff met with individual parents. A decision was made to move four classes of young children to regular campuses.

A goal of one visit a month was set by the director of special education for the 1988-89 school year. During the first semester, however, the director visitied almost every week. The provision of a quick response to concerns was considered important for the success of the program. The move was accomplished through the dedication and work of many people.

Role of the Elementary Counselor

Elementary counselors in Amarillo ISD are responsible for meeting the needs of handicapped and nonhandicapped students in each elementary school. Because the counselor worked with all of the students in the project school, and was familiar with its total operation, she was given the responsibility of facility planning, teacher preparation, and

student preparation.

Facility preparation began with an evaluation of the school in which the students were to be placed. Placement within the main building was considered to be vital for effective integration of the handicapped students into the regular program. Initial recommendations included the addition of appropriate playground equipment, upgrading toilet facilities to ensure access for walkers and wheelchairs, addition of ramps, soundproofing of classrooms, and minimizing hall travel. A need for a classroom with a carpeted area, room for gross motor activity, and running water were also noted. Planning for these changes was conducted prior to the other phases of orientation.

Following facility preparation, preparation of the teachers was addressed. A faculty meeting was held to discuss the rationale, expectations, and plans for student preparation. A positive and realistic attitude on the part of the principal is vital for successful preparation of the teachers. Because the principal serves as the instructional leader for the school, his or her support is critical. The principal at the project school was strongly supportive and very optimistic. Explanation of the rationale included a discussion of O.C.R. regulations and the educational soundness of the endeavor. Teachers were introduced to personnel from the self-contained school and were shown

photographs of the students. Fears were addressed in practical and realistic terms. Once teachers were oriented to the project, discussions were undertaken to develop a plan for student preparation. The entire faculty was involved in this phase. Plans for preparation included two parts, one for all classes and one for the partnering class. Involvement of the entire faculty was needed to ensure that the project would not be viewed as a special program imposed by a few or by an outside group.

Presentations designed to prepare the students for the partnering project were conducted prior to the implementation of the program. The rationale was explained in terms of the benefits handicapped students would receive by having contact with non-handicapped students. Modeling and opportunities for expanded awareness were discussed with the students. Expectations were discussed in terms of the abilities of the handicapped students and their limitations. The non-handicapped students were given opportunities to express fears and concerns and to discuss the importance of acceptance. The counselor then discussed ways to enhance the integration process. Suggestions included the use of "normal" conversation and topics for discussion. The use of the handicapped students name, maintenance of eye contact, and use of a normal tone of voice rather than baby talk were addressed. Students also learned how to talk "through" an

activity. After all students had been prepared, a fourth grade class was selected as the partnering class was selected.

Role of the Regular Classroom Teacher

The goals set for all non-handicapped students included the development of an awareness of and respect for their mentally retarded peers. Objectives included an understanding that everyone has likeness and differences and that mentally retarded persons can learn. The class selected for the Partnering project then proceeded with a more detailed discussion of mental retardation. Students were given the opportunity to provide written descriptions of mentally retarded persons. Following a discussion with the teacher, they were then asked if they wanted to be a partner. The answers were written and were turned in to the teacher. Examples of student responses before and after the experience are included in Appendix A.

Responsibilities of the nonhandicapped learners as outlined by the regular classroom teacher included: selection of reading materials, accompanying the handicapped partner to class, helping with lunch, assisting with art and music, participating in language building activities, and planning activities. Partners agreed to participate in activities in the regular classroom and the special classroom. The regular classroom teacher was able to achieve success through the

wise use of time, taking advantage of natural experiences, being flexible, using well-planned activities, and ensuring that the educational needs of the nonhandicapped students were not neglected. Success depended not only on a student partnership, but on a teacher partnership as well.

Role of the Special Education Teacher

The teacher of the severely and profoundly handicapped students participated in the preparation of the nonhandicapped students by discussing the nature of the special classroom and describing daily activities. The nonhandicapped students were given a tour of the special classroom prior to becoming partners. Once partners were selected, the special education teacher then provided the nonhandicapped partners with an orientation to the classroom and a structured interactive activity with the handicapped partner. Plans were then made for various activities in the regular and special classroom.

Many activities can be implemented during the mainstreaming of students who are severely and profoundly handicapped. Some of these are listed in Appendix B. Activities will need to be modified for each student. It is important to remember that almost any activity can be modified or adapted to fit the severely or profoundly handicapped student. Students should be allowed to work together in peer tutoring situations. Utilization of

centers, games and simulations are also beneficial. Nonhandicapped students should be encouraged to be good models when involved in interactive learning. Students should also be encouraged to use basic elements of reinforcement theory when working with a partner. It is extremely important for each nonhandicapped partner to let handicapped partners know that they are accepted as persons.

Throughout the first year, the special and regular classroom teachers functioned separately and as a team. At times, they would switch classrooms in an effort to demonstrate to the students that the special education teacher was a teacher also. More importantly, their team approach served as a model of cooperation for their students.

Summary

The success of the Partnering program can be measured in terms of the increase of more appropriate behaviors by the severely and profoundly handicapped students. It can also be measured in terms of the changed attitudes of the nonhandicapped students and the increase in number of students who want to be Partners. Figure 2 is an example of a student response following the Partnering experience. Figure 3 is a graph which indicates the increase in percentage of students desiring to participate in the Partnering program. Overall the experience was an extremely positive one. Because of the success of the initial

experience, a second year of partnering was planned.

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Appendix A

Goal:

Nonhandicapped students will develop an awareness of and respect for their mentally retarded peers.

Objectives:

- To realize we all have likenesses and differences
- To realize mentally retarded persons can learn

Describe A Mentally

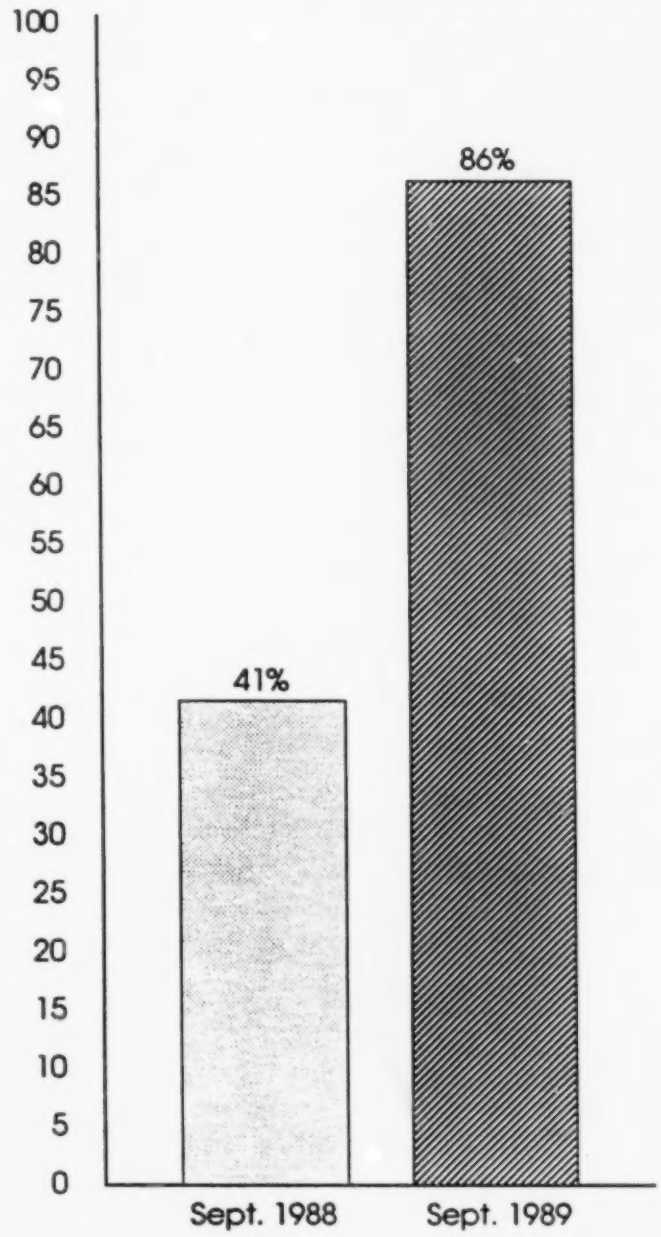
Retarded Person.

Do you want to be a partner?

I do not know alot about them, But I know about Shawn, he is retarded, But he can dribble a Basket ball, He can run, That is pretty amazeing, for a retarded person, But there are some thing's That he can't do, he can't Read, play mind games, or play Football Ball That dose not make him a bad person,

Yes, I want to be a partener.

POSITIVE STUDENT RESPONSES TO INTEGRATION



Question:

Do you want to be a partner?

How My Attitude Toward Our Partners Has Changed

I used to be kinda scard of them. But, now I think there just like us on the in side but not quite on the out side. Now I feel more better around them. I know alot more about them.

At first I was a little scared of them but when I got to know them I started to like them. Now I think their our friends.

I kind of thout that they couldn't do anything. But Shawn and Tavoris can do a lot. Tavoris has seisures but that is no prolum. Because I know how to react if he dose. Shawn is real good I know that he has prolum with eating. But I help him so that he dosen't get real messy. Klaum has attitude prolum but she is getting better. Shawn can walk behind me and infront of Mrs. Andreer like he is in line.

The first of the year I was sceptical but now I know they have feelings just like us. The only thing that is diffrint between us is they take longer to learn.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF NONHANDICAPPED PARTNERS

- select reading materials
- walk partner to class
- help with lunch
- assist with art and music
- build language
- plan activities

TIPS FOR REGULAR EDUCATOR

1. Ensure principal support.

2. Prepare nonhandicapped students.

3. Use time wisely.

4. Take advantage of natural experiences.

5. Be flexible.

6. Use well-planned activities.

7. Never neglect the educational needs of nonhandicapped students.

In Order For Integration To

Be Successful, Both The

Handicapped And The

Nonhandicapped Student

Must Form A Partnership

For Learning.

Appendix B

MAINSTREAMING ACTIVITY LIST

by Tina Androes

The following list of activities can be implemented during the mainstreaming of students who are severely and profoundly handicapped and nonhandicapped students. This is just a short list of activities that have been successful. You need to keep in mind that each child differs. You will need to modify the equipment, environment, and instruction for each child as needed. Almost any activity can be modified for the student who is severely and profoundly handicapped in the regulary classroom. The handicapped child may nenefit differently from the nonhandicapped.

Some activites may be incorporated during recess, lunch time, or between classes.

FINE MOTOR

* Shape Bingo
* Puzzles
* Coloring pages for different holidays or units of study
* Painting on sidewalk with paint brush and water on a warm day
* Clip art work on a line with clothespins
* Art activities involving cutting
* Stenciling
* Teaching signing
* Rhythm instruments
* Finger plays
* Picking up any item such as popcorn, crayons during an art activity
* Tearing paper for art projects

MATH

* Passing out art material one at a time to the group (one-to one correspondence)
* Passing out spoons, forks, cups, etc. at lunch or snack time

TACTILE

* Sponge painting
* Water play in search of objects
* Sandbox play during recess
* Modeling clay
* Writing letters, numbers, or shapes on the back
* Feeling bag of objects pertinent to study

VESTIBULAR

* During recess, child swings in a playground swing, hammock net, or tire
  Prone sliding
* Scooter boarding
* Rolling

PROPRIOCEPTIVE

* Tug of War (modified using knotted panty hose)
* Trampoline
* Animal Walks

AUDITORY

* Blind Man Bluff
* Identifying direction sound comes from
* Name various sounds while blind-folded

VISUAL SYSTEM

* Hitting a swinging ball with a stick or hands
* Following a swinging object

GROSS MOTOR

* Catching ball
* Angels in the snow
* Animal walks

GROSS MOTOR -continued

* Bean bag games
* Bilateral play with ribbon sticks
* Hot potato with balloon
* Parachute activities
* Shape twister
* Walking up or down stairs

EYE-HAND COORDINATION

* Stacking objects during clean-up
* Building towers or other art projects with this pattern
* Nesting objects exp. cups after a party or art activitiy
* Hitting a suspended object, exp. a pinata during a class party
* Balloon volleyball
* Turning a door knob to enter classroom

MUSIC

* Listening to music
* Rhythm instruments

SELF-HELP

* Any kind of clean up after party, art projects, or choice time
* Putting on coat before recess
* Washing and drying hands before and after lunch
* Imitate housework during choice time

COOKING

* Frosting cakes
* Any party treat that the class participates in making
* Measuring
* Pouring

SPEECH AND LANGUAGE

* Name games
* Listening to greeting or conversations of nonhandicapped
* Pointing or asking for food at the table during lunch

The nonhandicapped peer can serve as a tutor or model. The nonhandicapped child can be very useful to take up extra time for students who are not involved in one-on-one activities at a certain time.

SUGGESTIONS FOR MODIFYING INSTRUCTION FOR THE SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENT IN THE MAINSTREAM

by Tina Androes

* Allow students to work together in peer tutoring situations.
* Utilize centers, games, and simulations to stimulate interest.
* Allow student more time to complete task.
* Model
* Provide structure in routine, environment, and relationships.
* Always provide considered, consistent, and meaningful reinforcement as close to desired behaviors' occurence as possible.
* Break instrucitons and directions into short parts.
* Guide eyes and attention repeatedly to control on-task behavior.
* If child becomes frustrated with task at a given level, move to a lower level.
* Remove unnecessary materials from his/her immediate surroundings.
* Let the child know that you accept him/her as a person.
* Stay close in large areas.

The following recommedations are broken down by the specific handicap the severely and profoundly student may have.

ORTHOPEDICALLY HANDICAPPED AND OTHER HEALTH IMPAIRED

Physical Surrounding: Determine by disability, adequate wheelchair space, bathroom facilities, and specially designed

desks.

Instructional Activities: Modify physical activities as needed.

Materials: Book holders, page turners, large pencils, large crayons, masking tape.

Meeting Social and Emotional Needs: Accept the child's condition and encourage success.

HEARING

Physical Surrounding: Quiet area (preferably carpeted), curtains near audio sources, and possible accoustic tile.

Instructional Activities: Modify to meet individual needs.

Materials: Audiovisual aids.

Teaching strategies: Stand in front of the student when speaking, capture child's attention. Have child repeat if appropriate.

Emotional and Social Needs: Recognize fatgue behavior; look for subtle cues. Encourage peer acceptance.

SPEECH

Physical Surroundings: No major change.

Instructional Activities: Individualize language development experiences.

Materials: Audiovisual material such as a cassette player, tape recorder, language master, or mini-card-reader.

Teaching Strategies: Encourage the student to make choices. Use language experience and various word games.

Social and Emotional Needs: Exhibit patience and encourage peer interaction. Pace activities appropriately.

VISUAL

Physical Surrounding: Rearrange room to provide large work areas.

VISUAL- continued

Lower noise level. Accoustic factor.

Instructional Activities: Individualize instruction.

Materials: Amplified material. Equipment for brailling.

Teaching Strategies: Use concrete activities and manipulatives.

Social and Emotional Needs: Encourage free movement within the room. Encourage interation with peers.